

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The specification is amended by the present response to correct minor informalities. The changes made to the specification are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

Claims 1-42 are pending in this application. New claims 33-42 are presented for examination. Claims 14-20 and 18-20 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as a substantial duplicate of claims 1-7 and 5-7. Claims 8-10 and 11-13 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §175 as a substantial duplicate of claims 21-23 and 24-26, respectively. Claims 1, 2, 7, 15, 20, and 27-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. patent 6,088,476 to Shimamura. Claims 3, 4, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Shimamura. Claims 5, 6, 18, and 19 were noted as allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.¹ Claims 8-13 and 21-23 were noted as allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.²

Applicant and applicant's representative wish to thank Examiner Grant for the interview granted applicant's representative on October 28, 2004. During the interview the outstanding rejections were discussed in detail. Further, during the interview claim amendments were discussed to clarify claimed features over the applied art. The present response sets forth certain of the discussed claim amendments, and additional amendments to independent claims 1 and 14. During the interview applicant's representative also presented arguments as to how the amended claims addressed all the current rejections and objections.

¹ Applicants note the above-noted claims were not rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, but claims 18 and 19 were objected to as a duplicate of claims 5-7.

² Applicants note claims 8-13 and 21-23 were also not rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, but were noted as substantially duplicate claims.

Examiner Grant indicated he would further consider such amended claims when formally presented in a filed response.

Addressing now the objection to the various claims as duplicates, that objection is traversed by the present response.

Applicants note that the pending claims are not believed to recite any duplicates as certain claims recite features in "means plus function" language, whereas certain other claims do not. The claims are amended by the present response to even further clarify such differences.

Addressing now the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 7, 15, 20, and 27-32 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Shimamura, and the rejection of claims 3, 4, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Shimamura, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

With respect to each of independent claims 1 and 14, those claims are amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein.

According to features recited therein, and with reference to Figure 2 in the present specification as a non-limiting example, a process controller 211 sends instructions to units relating to image processing (for example an image reading unit, an image processing unit, and an image writing unit) and is connected to a first bus, and a system controller 231 sends instructions to units relating to the system (for example an image memory control unit and an image transmission/reception unit) and is connected to another bus. Further, an image data control unit 203 is provided as an interface between such a process controller 211 and a system controller 231.

Further, with the above-mentioned construction concurrent operation of a plurality of jobs is enabled, i.e., concurrent operation of the respective units can be realized.³ Such features are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art to Shimamura.

Shimamura discloses technology in which each unit has its own controller and is connected to the image bus 17 through its own controller to enable communication with other units. The own controller is connected to the CPU 1 through the system bus 16.

In contrast to Shimamura, in claims 1 and 14 as currently written a common controller is used according to the properties of the unit concerned, i.e., whether a unit relates to image processing or a unit relates to system control. In that respect, applicants submit that claims 1 and 14 clearly distinguish over Shimamura that utilizes a controller in each unit. Further, amended claims 1 and 14 enable concurrent operation by the construction that the system controller 231 and the process controller 211 control allocation of accesses of units such as the scanning unit 201, the image formation unit 206, and the parallel bus 220 to respective jobs.⁴ In contrast, Shimamura lacks a construction that corresponds to such a “system controller” and “process controller” and further to the claimed “switching unit”. Shimamura further fails to disclose that concurrent operation is as claimed possible. Further, the position in the Office Action that the “switching unit” corresponds to the “operation panel 15” is traversed since the operation panel 15 is merely used for providing input instructions for operation (see for example Shimamura at column 2, lines 65-67), but is not utilized for a switching.

In such ways, the above-noted claims clearly distinguish over the teachings in Shimamura.

With respect to rejected claims 27-32, applicants respectfully submit those claims also recite allowable subject matter.

³ See for example the present specification on page 27, lines 18-24, and page 89, line 25 to page 90, line 5.

⁴ See for example the present specification at page 27, lines 18-24.

Initially, applicants note independent claim 27 is amended by the present response to clarify that the multiplexed image data is received "at a same image data control unit", to clarify that each of the multiplexed data is received by the same image data control unit.

Specifically, independent claim 27 recites "an image data receiving of receiving ***multiplexed*** image data at a same image data control unit from any one or plural processing units to perform different processing on image data..." (emphasis added). The above-noted feature of receiving "multiplexed" image data is believed to distinguish over Shimamura. Applicants also note that such a feature was recited in other claims, for example independent claim 8, which was noted as allowable.

With respect to independent claim 27, applicants respectfully submit Shimamura does not disclose or suggest any operation of receiving multiplexed image data at a same image data control unit.

In such ways, independent claim 27 is believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

Applicants also note the other independent claims 28-32 recite similar features as in independent claim 27 noted above, and thus each of independent claims 28-32 are also believed to distinguish over the applied art.

Applicants also note the present response sets forth new claims 33-42 for examination. Those new claims are written to present subject matter indicated as allowable in the outstanding Office Action. More specifically, new independent claim 33 corresponds to previously pending dependent claim 6 rewritten in independent form, and new independent claim 38 corresponds to previously pending dependent claim 19 rewritten in independent form. The outstanding Office Action noted that such subject matter was allowable. Thus, new independent claims 33 and 38, and the claims dependent therefrom, are also believed to be allowable.

In view of the presently submitted amendments and these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending claims is allowable.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

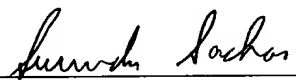
Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)
SNS/smi



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599
Surinder Sachar
Registration No. 34,423

I:\ATTY\SNS\20'S\201370\201370US-AM DUE 022705.DOC